

## Scenario 72

### **ARMY GENERALS EXTENDED [2010]:**

**On 17<sup>th</sup> August 1988**, when Gen Ziaul Haq along with his 19 colleagues and two American top diplomats met an air crash allegedly after some mango crates, gifted to him by the *Bahawalpuri* admirers, exploded just after seven minutes of take-off, Gen Mirza Aslam Beg, the then Army Chief was tipped to announce for another Martial law. He avoided it.

Gen Beg went soft, highly disciplined and touched highest echelons of civility by choosing the democratic rule for the country. He asked the then Chairman of the Senate Mr Ghulam Ishaq Khan (GIK) to take over reins of the government and to announce general elections within ninety days.

General elections were held in November 1988; Benazir Bhutto came as the Prime Minister but they could not pull on with each other smoothly. The advisors to the PM Benazir Bhutto could not apprehend that they were able to hold the reigns of power simply because of this Army General. The things went worse and Gen Beg had to tip, suggest and advise the then President GIK [in 1990] for another elections. By distributing Rs:140 million among the PPP's opponents Gen Beg made sure that the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) should win with majority.

This distribution of 140 millions, snatched by the ISI from Hassan Habib the then Chief of defunct Mehran Bank, was stirred in the Supreme Court of Pakistan by Air Marshal ® Asghar Khan in 1996. So many judges picked up the case for hearing but the exercises ended in futile.

Once CJP Saeeduzzaman Siddiqui wanted to announce the decision in 1999 but then allegedly the army prevailed; the file was sent in the cold room. It is a separate and eloquent story which has been narrated in Volume One of this book in details which issue ultimately was taken up by the CJP Iftikhar M Chaudhry in early 2012 and announced the judgment [titled as ASGHAR KHAN CASE] in ending that year.

In nut-shell, the PML was made to win the elections of 1990 and Nawaz Sharif surfaced as Prime Minister as per '**Planning of the Agencies**'. What made Gen Beg angry all of a sudden within two years of Nawaz Sharif's first premiership, no body knows. Gen Beg started repenting on his decision of managing PML's victory and once gave a final shape to his plans of dissolving the government and to bring Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi as an interim Prime Minister.

When the intelligence reports reached PM Nawaz Sharif, he immediately announced nomination of Gen Asif Janjua as the new Army Chief. It was all against the norms and traditions then prevailing in the Army and the governments (because there were five months more with Gen Beg to serve as Army Chief) but it was taken as a wise step. PM Nawaz Sharif had also ensured that the news should get a wide publicity in media with comments and editorials with side stories.

A serving army Chief was told (in 1990s) five months earlier that he had to go home and then there came more hilarious moments in Pakistan's history '**when (on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2010) an Army Chief, Gen Ashfaq Kayani, was told five months earlier that his tenure stands extended by three years**'.

In the previous situation there was an emergency aroused for Nawaz Sharif of PML and in the second situation there were stakes held by President Zardari and PM Yousaf Raza Gilani, both belonging to the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

But it has been happening in our history since very early days. Referring to an interview of Gen Faiz Ali Chishti, a veteran companion of Gen Ziaul Haq at the time of July 1977's coup, published in **daily 'Jang' of 20<sup>th</sup> June 1999**, a very factual analysis made by him points out that the

responsibility of giving way to the army Generals generally goes to the inept and ineffective civil politicians. He said:

*'The civilian rulers made Gen Ayub Khan a Commander in Chief in early 1950s. Was he a deserving General; No, the decision was not taken by the army itself but the then civilian rulers.*

*In 1954 when his tenure of service was extended; who had done that. The then civilian rulers who might have sent some other deserving Generals home just because they liked Ayub Khan. Wrong it was.*

*Gen Musa Khan's performance as Commander in Chief in 1965 War was zero. He deserved court martial on account of his follies on record but he was given extension.*

*The military record of Gen Yahya Khan was having hundreds of pages describing stories, events and complaints regarding his 'loose character', but why was he promoted and taken so high, up to an Army Chief and then Chief Martial Law Administrator.'*

A sad story but still available on record that Gen Gul Hassan was made the Army Chief jointly by Z A Bhutto & COAS Gen Yahya Khan on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1971 just after the debacle of East Pakistan. His tenure, however, was short-lived. He was ousted as army chief on 3rd March 1972 by the order of the Civilian Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) and the President Z A Bhutto. His retirement privileges and benefits were also taken away, an utter disgrace to the whole army as an honourable institution.

*[Gen Tikka Khan was senior to Gen Gul Hassan. When the later was made the army chief, Gen Tikka Khan should have gone on retirement as per established army traditions but he had not.*

*Not only this, Gen Tikka Khan had humiliated the whole army by accepting a political slot of 'Minister of State' in Mr Bhutto's cabinet. It was OK if he was made a 'full federal minister'; but Mr Bhutto intentionally degraded the army by giving him a lesser portfolio and Tikka Khan was a party to it.*

*Gen Ziaul Haq was made the Army Chief on 1st March 1976 by PM Z A Bhutto while superseding a number of more senior officers. At the time of his nominating the successor to the outgoing chief Gen Tikka Khan the Lieutenant Generals in order of seniority were, Muhammad Shariff, Muhammed Akbar Khan, Aftab Ahmed Khan, Azmat Baksh Awan, Agha Ibrahim Akram, Abdul Majeed Malik, Ghulam Jilani Khan, and Ziaul Haq. But, Bhutto chose the most junior, dropping seven seniors to him.*

*Why was he [Gen Ziaul Haq] chosen even though he had never taken part in any war like Gul Hassan.*

***Gen Tikka Khan was offered extension by Mr Bhutto for a year in his service which he refused.*** *Before going he sent recommendations for new Army Chief saying that either of Gen Shariff and Gen Akbar Khan be considered. For Gen Aftab, Gen A B Awan and Gen Jilani it was written explicitly that the three were not fit for that slot (perhaps because they spent most of their services in intelligence directorates).*

*For Gen Majeed and Gen Ziaul Haq it was stated that both were recently promoted, just gone on corps commander's postings but Mr Bhutto, being totally dishonest towards many, selected Gen Ziaul Haq, the junior most, considering him the most docile. Mr Bhutto had suffered enough for that mistake.]*

In July 2010, Gen Kayani was given three years extension in his tenure. He had succeeded Gen Musharraf as the COAS on 29th November 2007. PM Mr Gilani had extended Gen Kayani's term as Chief of the Army Staff making him the first four-star officer to receive a term extension from any democratic government.

Immediately after, the **daily 'Jang' dated 28<sup>th</sup> July 2010** commented:

*'There was an apprehension that the vibrant judiciary would call him in the Supreme Court [though he had not done anything apparently wrong]'*.

The media had raised their eyebrows on it that if Rehman Malik and Babar Awan could be called in the court being federal ministers then why not a retired General.

However, the announcement was done in utmost haste. The telecast was made all of a sudden and during such late hours of night leaving the people in astray. It was a broadcast of only two and a half minute, when the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr Gilani, had affirmed an extension in tenure of the Army Chief Gen Ashfaq Kayani for three years effective from **29<sup>th</sup> November 2010** when he was likely to go on retirement in an ordinary course of nature. Next day the PM told the press that:

***'Now the stability would prevail in the country because the President, the Prime Minister, the Army Chief and the Chief Justice of Pakistan, all will be retiring in 2013.'***

***'There will be no threat of martial law or any voice of mid-term elections in the country now'.***

This statement itself had divulged a cogent hidden fact that there was definitely some danger or threat which caused this extension that too for an unprecedented period of three years.

### **WAS IT AN AMERICAN PROPOSAL?**

The intelligentsia was ready to pass comments that it was done on immense pressure from their War on Terror ally called America because Gen Ashfaq Kayani [allegedly] suited them more than any Pakistani General before, even more than Rehman Malik and President Zardari both; though the subsequent developments guided that Gen Kayani did not bother about America much.

Why such thoughts! Because just three months earlier, the Federal Defence Minister Mr Ahmed Mukhtar, had issued a press statement that no extension would be given to the Army Chief. What was the sudden emergency which had cropped up during the night of 24<sup>th</sup> July 2010 that the Ministry of information could not find enough moments to type a hand out of forty words and had to fax out a hand-written four line statement to prominent TV channels wishing PM's address to the nation in emergency. It was less than three minutes telecast.

Explore another proposition: Mr Zardari always acted upon advice of Rehman Malik or Husain Haqqani given on various subjects as [allegedly] both were the bonafide agents on the pay roll of the American CIA [*and they took it as pride rather to keep it as secret*] and constantly working on the US agenda but it had been the Pakistan's history.

Even Z A Bhutto was scared of this white 'friend'. Benazir Bhutto had availed the US blessings twice; America had forced Gen Mirza Aslam Beg and President GIK in 1988 to bring her as the PM though under some conditions. Similarly, it was America who had forced Gen Musharraf in 2007 to strike a deal [of NRO] with Benazir Bhutto to facilitate her coming back to Pakistan and to hold the elections of 2008 calling her the winner.

In 1999 when PM Nawaz Sharif had felt threats from his Army Chief Gen Musharraf, he had also sent Shahbaz Sharif to Washington to get a word of stern advice for his military commander.

Pakistan Army still remembers those moments of humiliation when, while drafting the Kerry Lugar Bill in September 2009 for aid to Pakistan, Mr Husain Haqqani had [allegedly & deliberately] got included certain embarrassing clauses in the draft which were not at all acceptable to the army. The result was that the Army immediately sent a note of anger and resentment to the PPP government. When the said bill was accented in October 2009 by the US Congress, the same evening a special meeting of Corps Commanders in GHQ was summoned and the KL Bill was rejected.

The government of Pakistan could not get more than \$300 million aid, against a promise of \$1.5 billion per year, under that KL arrangement till 2012; the US government withdrew its favours because Pakistan Army had declined to extend any cooperation required by virtue of that aid-bill. The GOP had got axed their own feet by making a false and cunning move through Husain Haqqani.

The angry army leadership over the KL Bill was then compensated by giving three years extension in the tenure of Gen Pasha, the ISI Chief while the Army Chief had already bagged the extension.

Whatever be the case; the said announcement of extension in Army Chief's tenure was made during an interval when the US Foreign Secretary Hillary Clinton was there on Pakistan's tour and soon after the US Army Chief Mike Mullin paid a sudden visit to Pakistan to advise the sitting government on two main issues that:

- *'Firstly Osama Bin Laden is in Pakistan;*
- *Secondly Lashkar e Tayyabah is expanding;*

*thus Pakistan should concentrate its efforts to handle these two acute problems at the earliest'.*

It was also a coincidence that when the three year's extension was announced for Gen Ashfaq Kayani, the next dawn brought another strange announcement from across the border that **'Hakim ullah Mehsood and Qari Fazalullah are still alive, they are not dead'**.

It was a challenge for Pakistan Army on one side but at the same time it was an eye opening bomb-shell for Pakistani media pointing fingers towards Army press releases which had brought dozens of columns in praise of uniformed people and their strategies on death news of the two.

After three days, another message was conveyed to the people of Pakistan through targeting one **Arshad Hussain** to death near Noshera in Khyber PK province. He **was the only son of Iftikhar Hussain, the sitting Information Minister of Khyber PK.**

Next day a suicidal-bomb blast took place near the same provincial Information Minister's residence claiming eight deaths and leaving about thirty persons injured. The government and the army were unable to read the message.

Coming back to sudden telecasts; it was a second occasion when the people of Pakistan had seen PM Gilani making a tele-announcement in alike hasty manner; with confused head and pale face. The earlier occasion was on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2009 when he had bowed his head before a moving mass of about a million people towards Islamabad and had agreed for reinstatement of the CJ Iftikhar M Chaudhry along with his fellow judges unconditionally. The people still believe that the cause of that defeated announcement was also sponsored by Gen Kayani.

The deep analysis of PM Gilani's verdict would take you nowhere. The think tanks opined that once again the Pakistan's Army was being dragged into politics in the name of Gen Kayani with whose efforts and cautious behaviour the Army was achieving success in keeping itself away from dirty politics of Pakistan after Gen Musharraf's devastating, distressing and demoralizing policies.

Whatever the case be, PM Gilani had in a way confirmed that in the absence of this extension, there was a strong likelihood of some casualty in respect of someone amongst the top three most probably either the PM or the President or the whole PPP.

The PPP had made a cogent achievement in political scenario then prevailing in Pakistan but the extension was also termed as a challenge for Gen Kayani because his appointment as an Army Chief was done by a military dictator himself whereas the extension granted was mostly considered as *'fresh political appointment of Gen Kayani'* done by political bosses for future political gains.

The time would reveal the truth behind the iron curtain of probabilities but the fact remains that till then Gen Kayani had proved himself as a very sensitive person as far as his professional skills and self respect were concerned. His past record had reflected that he did not believe in narrow thinking or tapered behaviour nor had he shown any undue favour for either pressure group; very deep inside and looking calm at face. Everyone was aware for his close association with Gen Musharraf but when the public opinion turned against that military dictator, Gen Kayani did not stand by him.

It was also a fact that had Gen Kayani refused to accept three years extension in his tenure, his person would have been taller and higher. He would have been capable enough to convey that his junior team members were equally sensible, responsible, dependable, accountable, more professional and more sincere & loyal for the country. As he had undertaken another long travel for three years he experienced many changes and would see more till his retirement.

After 2012's elections of America and having four more years for President Obama, 2013's general elections in Pakistan, new Parliament and new provincial governments, new Prime Minister, new President, new American government, reformed exit strategy for NATO forces from Afghanistan in 2014 [if it happened so] and what more unseen changes, nobody knows.

Once in early June 1958, the then President Iskandar Mirza, in a similar haste (as of PM Gilani in July 2010), by sending a hand-written note of only two lines, giving two years extension to the then Commander-in-Chief Ayub Khan, had opted and managed to call his own end within four months. Gen Ayub Khan had then extended his own rule till March 1969 - for eleven years.

Who knows what would happen next.

How the Americans had managed to bring the PPP regime up to the nerve-breaking point, extract of an article written by **Jamsheed K C**, *professor of International Studies at Indiana University*, appearing at internet media **on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2009** is reproduced below:

*'Conditions in Pakistan have been ripening, like the mango fruit eaten there, for another military coup d'etat. The economy has slumped, corruption is rampant, and terrorism is endemic. People are losing faith in the officials they brought to power.*

*This time, the soldiers may not have to use guns and tanks. They can bide their time until the elected government descends into chaos, then march in as national saviour. But the country's judiciary is swiftly becoming a player to be reckoned with too.'*

[How correct that prediction was! One can see around in 2011-12; once again some people were shouting loud to call the army to save Pakistan.]

Professor Jamsheed kept on saying that on 16<sup>th</sup> December [2009] Pakistan's Supreme Court declared as unconstitutional the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO). The NRO was an amnesty granted in October 2007 by Gen Musharraf to politicians facing corruption and other criminal charges filed between January 1986 and October 1999. With that decision, all hell broke loose -- politically speaking.

Interior Minister Rehman Malik himself was once facing arrest by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on corruption charges. President Zardari was facing the possibility of 12 corruption charges being reinstated. Worse, the Supreme Court had suggested that the government should ask Switzerland to reopen a money-laundering investigation against him that was once dropped on grounds of poor mental health. The judiciary was constantly humiliated for months because the ruling PPP simply flouted the apex court's orders on the pretext that why their opponents Sharif brothers were not being touched by the court.

So were demands by political opponents and the general public that PPP's inefficient administration be stripped of power. Pakistan's military had regained some of its prestige through considerable success by launching certain meaningful operations against Islamic militants within Swat and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas [FATA]. The Generals remained united as one group -- the other was the judiciary.

Not unexpectedly, the military once more faced mounting pressure to restore order in Pakistan, even at the expense of democracy. Many among the entrepreneurial middle class and westernized upper class regard the military as the most viable and stable national institution.

As the Generals remained silent, Zardari's administration had been reduced to threatening people for SMS text jokes about its corruption with jail terms of up to 14 years. As Pakistan's primary ally and aid donor, the United States had indeed faced much difficulties coupled with embarrassment and disgrace while dealing with the Pakistan army directly. The US President Obama once said in 2009:

*'So, despite its avowed aim of promoting democracy and human rights worldwide, the current U.S. administration may soon be stuck with having to accept an illegitimate Pakistani government led by Generals trying to restore order despite that in late July, Pakistan's Supreme Court declared illegal an earlier state of emergency declared by the military and it is likely to do so again.'*

One could judge that when tens of similar threatening communications were fed through foreign media in continuity that US would prefer to negotiate with military bosses of Pakistan; and the US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton visited Pakistan to assure the rulers that nothing would happen till Gen Kayani remained in uniform, then of course, such like telecasts and extensions were the natural outcome and were considered appropriate with reference to the given context.

Still Pakistan could be seen as a colony; looking towards commands and forced advice from abroad.

As has been mentioned earlier; on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2011, the Prime Minister Gilani roared in the Parliament emphasizing that he would not allow **'a state within a state'** pointing towards army & ISI. In the first week of January 2012, when Mr Zardari was asked [**Ref: GEO News TV Interview**] to comment, he said that:

*'He is a powerful Prime Minister. He has all the powers; he does not feel (he is) under anybody. If there is some (matter) which is annoying him, he has the right to take a position, and he has taken a position.'*

When asked about the three-year extension given to Army Chief Gen Kayani, Mr Zardari said **'this is now a question in history'**.

However, in the **'TIME's 2010: persons of the year'**, Gen Kayani appeared as:

**'Highs:** *Pakistan's army chief steered his country's military — long accused of abetting certain militant extremist groups, including the Afghan Taliban — toward confronting the jihadists in their midst. During the disastrous floods that ravaged Pakistan this summer, Kayani was seen as an energetic and effective figurehead of the relief effort even when the civilian government, led by unpopular President Asif Ali Zardari, in Islamabad, had been pilloried for its sluggish response.*

**'Lows:** *..... In a surprise move, Kayani had his tenure extended by three years this November. The move has sparked concern in some quarters over the popular army chief's long-term ambitions. Pakistan has a long, troubled history of intervention and rule by military strongmen.'*

There are more important things in history to be remembered.

### **GEN KAYANI – 3 YEARS AFTER:**

Pakistan's Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani once visited India for the India-Pakistan cricket semi-final after the visit was cleared by the Army. He was not able to board the flight had Gen Kayani

not smiled. Gen Kayani, while in command, retained the support of the soldiers; largely because he stayed away from the media. He was never interested in publicity unlike his predecessor Gen Musharraf and had shown little interest in becoming the politician in uniform. This all went to his credit ensuring only with one extension as Army chief.

During Gen Kayani in chair, the politicians were able to focus on the civilian institutions of state and went for strengthening democracy in Pakistan. This policy also allowed the Army to consolidate its hold on matters of strategic importance. Gen Kayani went successful in improving relations with Afghan President Hamid Karzai from freezing to almost warm levels and ensured a level of cooperation between the two.

During the **last week of February 2013**, Gen Kayani, burst the bubble of hope of the anti-democracy elements for a military coup by supporting the continuation of the democratic process and transfer of power through impartial elections, besides emphasising the army's subservient role to a civilian government. He had invited prominent print and electronic media men on lunch and spoken out his heart during an off-the-record 4-hour briefing. Gen Kayani said that:

*'He fully supports the idea of holding a free, fair, and transparent elections leading to a smooth transfer of power in the country. He had assured the Chief Election Commissioner of full cooperation on the matter.*

*The army has stood by the democratically-elected government during the past five years as required under the constitution.*

*That everyone must respect the mandate of the people and for this the army will provide the maximum help, but only that much which is asked for by the civilians.'*

Gen Kayani was successful to dispel the speculations about a possible delay in the polls and the installation of a caretaker set up for a longer period. Gen Kayani's statements, indeed, reflected a paradigm shift in the thinking of the military commanders in regard to the role of the army in a state. Many media anchors recalled their Quaid who had, while reminding the army officers at Staff College Quetta on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1948, about the significance of oath of allegiance to the constitution, said:

*"I should like you to study the constitution, which is in force in Pakistan at present, and understand its true constitutional and legal implications when you say you will be faithful to the constitution."*

It has never been considered fair to chastise Pak-Army because of the recklessness of 'some' individual Generals; Gen Kayani strengthened its credentials as supporter of the democratic system and the government by resisting all temptations. Equally laudable were the efforts of the superior judiciary that repeatedly vowed not to allow any unconstitutional move from any quarter, in addition to its unflinching faith in the democratic process.

Fortunately, Pakistan availed an independent media playing an admirable role in strengthening democracy.

The end message seemed to be that *'no one should try to play games with the transparency and fairness of the elections and the results must be accepted but the army will not impose itself in any way and this job has to be done by the civilians themselves.'*

In his briefing, Gen Kayani gave a long list of civilian failures during the last five years, almost a charge sheet against the politicians and the government and placed the blame of gigantic failures in many critical domains at the civilian doorstep. Not to intervene was constitutionally a constructive approach but in reality it brought the country to the verge of collapse; and Gen Kayani did not want to share the blame.

Examples of the civilians' failure that he quoted, in his own soft style were:

- The key issue of war against terrorism; do not blame the army as the civilians had not formulated a comprehensive anti-terrorism policy and they could not decide what to do.
- The army had not been consulted or taken on board about the political All Parties Conferences [APC] held on counter-terrorism.
- The civilians depended too much on ISI & MI and went scared of them too whereas the tasks should have been done by their own civilian intelligence agencies like IB and Police's Special Branch.
- Where are the civilian agencies? Total failure of the Interior & Home ministries; sometimes army guided the civilians to reform and take responsibility yet did not intervene to stop the decay.
- The army knew that these [incompetent] politicians will not be able to handle the gigantic issues like the war on terror, the Balochistan mess, the [religious] domestic extremism but they did not interfere so that the army may not be blamed.

Gen Kayani, in this context, reminded the Swat situation where he had to persuade President Zardari to take a decision. He also took ANP leader Asfandiyar Wali to the President and when the decision was taken to talk to Maulana Sufi Mohammed, the dialogue were held but when he violated the accord, an operation was launched. Then the civilians had to take over the responsibility which they did not.

Gen Kayani specifically mentioned the arrests made in Swat and complained that:

*'For more than five years, Pak-Army is holding those people; the establishment either violating laws by doing so or risks more terrorism if they are released. But if those arrested persons are not convicted because of lack of evidence, the army cannot hold them forever.'*

Gen Kayani said that an army operation could be launched in Balochistan if the civilians take that decision and order the army to do so. *'But once the operation is done and people are arrested, they will have to be tried and convicted by the police and courts for which the civilians are not ready.'*

In short, Gen Kayani explained army's five years of non-interference and failure of the greedy politicians to cope with the disasters which could have been handled with good governance.

Albeit; Gen Kayani knew well that there had been Gen Musharraf's un-interrupted rule for complete eight years with complete dominance of the army including him; the persecution of selected politicians, the exploitation of the political system, physical threats to political leaders, their assassinations and mass murders, and importing WOT into this poor country at the cost of our meagre infra-structure were also equally responsible for leading Pakistan towards a failed state.

Shaheen Sehbai, in **'the News' of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013**, was right to say:

*'..... So there was no way the army could avoid an election [of 2008] but there was no way the civilians could correct everything messy that the Generals were leaving behind.'*

*Similar is the issue with the present elections. Gen Kayani is now saying that elections must be free, fair and transparent but the set-up that has been put in place is controversial, weak and fragile, weakest at the top.'*



**ANOTHER NRO PLANNED:**

During the first week of March 2013, the media in Pakistan has been talking about another NRO being imminent like the one promulgated by former dictator Gen Musharraf which paved the way for Benazir Bhutto and Mian Nawaz Sharif to return to Pakistan and take part in 2008 Elections. Then it was thought to be a pre-requisite for fair elections. For elections of 2013 no Ordinance was needed as the 20th Amendment passed unanimously by the parliament was in saddles to ensure the fair elections conducted through an impartial non-political administration.

However, the real string pullers sitting far away in Washington DC and London had no concern with fairness of elections; they wanted any government in Pakistan but dependent on them; not on popular judiciary and the powerful military. **Usman Khalid of 'Rifah Org'** held in his essay **dated 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013** on internet media that:

*"When NRO-1 was promulgated [in October 2007], no one, not even Gen Musharraf, had any idea that the end result would be the emergence of Asif Ali Zardari. The handlers of President Zardari – Altaf Hussain, Rehman Malik, Salman Farooqi and Hussain Haqqani etc had been the real rulers of Pakistan over the last five years.*

*The same group coined NRO-2 to ensure 'no change in policies'; change of faces were tolerable. The stage was set for Nawaz Sharif to be the premier as the head of another 'coalition' and would ensure 'no change in policy', particularly foreign policy; through NRO-2."*

Nawaz Sharif's one to one meeting with the British Foreign Secretary at London, facilitated through Wajid Shamsul Hassan of London's High Commission, during last days of PPP's government is referred here for details.

During the gimmicks of 'caretaker set up' all the given names were only to be discussed in media whereas the real compromise had already been done on one name by both the ruling PPP and the opposition PML(N), that was Asma Jehangir, but she herself avoided to come forward, made an open announcement for that, thus saved her own life.

Asma Jahangir was the favourite of both the PPP and the PML(N) because she had for decades demonized the Pakistan Army as the 'enemy' of the political culture; once accused the ISI for her assassination. If she was appointed caretaker PM there was every likelihood of her being assassinated. Like the assassination of Benazir paved the way for the PPP to win the 2008 Elections and Asif Zardari becoming a despotic ruler of Pakistan to plunder the state with impunity, Asma's assassination could instigate yet another military rule in Pakistan.

The victims of violence in Pakistan, particularly the Shia community, had already propagated much for the military to protect them. Under the prevailing political dispensation which was hostile to the military as evidenced by the 'memo-gate' affair, the military went much constrained. At that crucial moment no one was talking about terrorism, poor people's funds illegally or fraudulently spent by the PPP & its allied parties, and of 'load shedding' that had wrecked life as well as the economy of Pakistan.

**ISI CHIEF EXTENDED, TOO:**

**On 16<sup>th</sup> January 2010, Arif Nizami** wrote that:

*'Civilian control over the armed forces is a holy principle of democracy but has never been practiced in Pakistan even Mr Bhutto could not rein in the army after East Pakistan's debacle in 1971.*

*Bhutto first succumbed to its demand that a film showing the surrender of Pakistani forces to India be withdrawn from PTV. Later, keeping the sensitivities of the army in mind, he decided to put the Hamoodur Rehman Commission Report in cold storage. Ultimately he was ousted and hanged by his handpicked army chief, Gen Ziaul Haq.'*

Much later, heavy mandated PM Nawaz Sharif tried to emasculate all institutions, one after another, and sacked his Army Chief Gen Jehangir Karamat [along with President and the CJP]. When Nawaz tried to sack the next Army Chief Gen Musharraf, he had to pay the price by being kicked out himself. Had his American and Arab mentors not pleaded with Gen Musharraf to send him into 10 years exile, he would have met the same fate as Mr Bhutto had seen two decades earlier.

Might be that under the Constitution Nawaz Sharif was perfectly within his rights as prime minister to sack his army chief but there were codes of conduct, rationale for so big actions and certain procedural formalities required to be obliged by all institutional heads. This time the army itself was determined to extend its armed blow to avoid further humiliation.

After NRO's decision of December 2009, a perception developed that the military would be getting rid of President Zardari and the acuity prevailed for quite long. After the SC's unanimous verdict declaring the NRO *ultra vires* of the Constitution, some forces, including some sections of the media, trumpeted high that the army and its intelligence apparatus were trying to get the presidency vacated.

The military, in fact, were too busy in dealing with the existential threat within from the Taliban but the flames were high. ISI had totally dissociated itself from political affairs beyond an iota of doubt thus there was no trust deficit between military and the government. Despite such clarifications, rumours kept on swinging with quotes from one Corps Commander's meeting on the Kerry Lugar Bill in ending 2009.

The fact remains that the GHQ had to take the unusual step of getting public approval through print and electronic media about its reservations about the KL bill when certain security clauses were added without consultations with it, the ISI or the Foreign Office. The government, on the other hand, insisted that the military was fully on board on the matter which was not correct.

Even then, Gen Kayani had assured both President Zardari and PM Gilani about their zero designs to undermine the democratic process though it was not at all required. President Zardari's close relationship with USA was another irritant not only with the army but also with general populace in Pakistan. PPP's corruption stories spread over media papers, their poor governance and a dull economic performance had disturbed all including the GHQ. The later could argue that the government's poor show had encroached upon its defence capabilities; referring to the ever prevailing internal insurgency especially.

Nawaz Sharif had time and again reiterated his support for a democratic system but his words apparently could not match with PML(N)'s deeds on ground. Nawaz Sharif, as a leader in waiting, would have lost every thing had the military moved in.

The governance and transparency were so ill managed, that not only the army but the media and the public at large had strong reservations about the PPP rulers. The dream of even an ounce of civilian control over the GHQ could be realised had the politicians set their own house in order; shredding off the self-interests and power-grabbing games were the foremost requirements.

On **30<sup>th</sup> December 2008**, the print and electronic media had displayed:

*"In a major reshuffle in the army's top command, Chief of the Army Staff Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani brought in a new head of the all-powerful Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)*

...

*Perhaps the most surprising of all such changes is the appointment of Lt-Gen Ahmed Shuja Pasha as the new Director General of ISI .... A highly professional soldier in his own right, Lt-Gen Pasha has, for the past over two years, been overseeing the ongoing security operation in the tribal areas and parts of the NWFP.*

*In his capacity as the Director-General military operations (DGMO) he was directly responsible for the launching and execution of all major security strikes in Fata and Swat, the latest being the major onslaught against religious extremists in the Bajaur tribal agency."*

**On 10<sup>th</sup> February 2010**, the government decided to extend the tenure of DG ISI Lt Gen Ahmad Shuja Pasha, for a period of one year. The decision was taken after the satisfactory performance of ISI in the war against terrorism.

The file was sent to the Presidency for a formal approval though the Army Chief did not need to send a summary for extension in the tenure of a 3-star General. A year earlier, Lt Gen Masood Aslam, Corps Commander for Peshawar, was given an extension by Gen Kayani, the Army Chief himself. The other extensions in the recent history of Pakistan Army were of Lt Gen Hamid Javed, Chief of Staff to former president Gen Musharraf, and the Chief of Strategic Plans Division, Lt Gen Khalid Kidwai.

Lt Gen Kidwai was due to retire in 2006, but was given extensions more than once due to the technical nature of his assignment. He continued to be the Chief of the SPD even after completion of his extended term as Lt General.

Then the top brass of Pakistan Army was set to undergo a reshaping process with the retirement of 12 three-star generals, including four corps commanders, during the year 2010, warranting more major promotions and the necessary reshuffles again. Three of the Lt Generals, including incumbent DG ISI, Gen Pasha, were scheduled to retire on 18<sup>th</sup> March or nearer. The other two were Lt Gen Tanvir Tahir & Lt Gen M Ashraf Saleem; Lt Gen Ahsan Azhar Hayat was going to retire in the mid-March.

Obviously and primarily the prime minister was the appointing authority of the ISI Chief and he could appoint anyone, civilian or uniformed; though it never happened before smoothly or if the PM had ever used his prerogative without danger signals. Traditionally, the COAS has been using this authority to appoint his spy chief.

The readable message in the above media report was that *"Gen Kayani ... has put in place a new team to implement his vision for reviving the prestige of the armed forces and for enhancing the security of the state."* Nothing new; the army has always been in charge of national security. Gen Pasha had 15 months with him to reach the age of superannuation; but if the 'required goal' was not achieved in 15 months, he was also to be considered for extension.

The same happened; he was needed for the sake of 'continuity' that without him the new security policy could not be implemented. The most charitable explanation for Pasha's extension was that Kayani and Pasha were together and fighting good of reorienting the Pakistan Army and changing its security outlook.

Gen Kayani mostly went contemptuous of the PPP government and its leader Mr Zardari, though never made it public even once; never wasted time negotiating with them as equals. During this nerve-war Gen Kayani always kept Gen Pasha by his side; as the Generals know the best and the 'bloody civilians' just don't get it. [*Gen Musharraf's journeys from one court to the other during April 2013 and after is a case study in this regard; isn't it?*]

During the same days, another issue played with the hearts of the general populace of Pakistan and that was the increased army spending.

Till end of the February 2010, the army budgetary expenditure was marked by over Rs:93 billion higher during that fiscal year. The normal defence expenditure rose by 12 per cent to Rs:166 billion during the first six months of the fiscal year 2009-10, from Rs:148 billion of the same period last year. Spending on public order and safety affairs also went up by 48 per cent to Rs:166 billion from Rs:139 billion.

The fact remained that additional expenditure on security operations in Malakand division and the tribal region had separately been made part of grants that increased from Rs:93.4 billion to Rs:134 billion in six months of the next fiscal year. The figure for the corresponding period during the previous year was Rs:40 billion.

The questions were raised that the Army Chief's decision to give extension in service to a couple of Lieutenant Generals on his own was a valid step or not; though under the rules Gen Kayani had the powers to promote senior officers without consulting the government. The intelligentsia had a safe corner that the decision was a part of the Pak-Afghan scenario on a larger canvas.

Prime Minister Gilani, however, preferred to convey an impression of 'no objection'. During Gen Musharraf's tenure the GHQ decided that heads of the department could give leave to their staff. This was done to provide relief to those who had to run from pillar to post to get their leave sanctioned. However, this power did not interfere with the government's authority to give its sanction to all other decisions including promotions or extensions.

The government's first and only white paper on defence written during the 1970s had strengthened the defence ministry's position as the main interface between the military and the civilian government. The first defence secretary was not only a civilian, he was a non-bureaucrat. To counter this move a centre-point was created in the form of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee [JCSC]. Unfortunately, neither institution could grow because of the military takeover in 1977.

The JCSC couldn't really stand up to the pressure of the military in the seat of power. Later, under Gen Musharraf, the army more or less killed the institution by changing one of the core principles for the JCSC that is the appointment of its Chairman by rotation. PM Nawaz Sharif, during his second stint, mistakenly or innocently contributed to the malaise by appointing Gen Musharraf as the Chairman when it was actually the naval chief's turn. In Pakistan's power politics it is the army chief who calls the shots.

The Indo-Pak history is witness to the fact that moves to alter the principles of governance always went costly. The Indians suffered as a result of this during the 1960s. Their defence establishment got into questionable human resource management in the armed forces which lost them the war of 1962 against China.

Gen Kayani might have signalled to PM Gilani that *'human resource management in the army comes under his purview and that he does not want politicians to decide on military issues'*.

Even in America those days, there were many [in Washington] in favour of an extension for the army chief. Some in the Obama administration continued to bet on the military horse rather than the civilian government. Within the army the preference was for certain officers, especially the ISI chief Gen Pasha; whether or not this personality-driven approach solved the Pak-Afghan problem to Washington's satisfaction was another theme.

Gen Pasha continued to hold reigns of the ISI. However, **on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2011**, Wikileaks documents had shown US investigators considered Pakistan's ISI to be a terrorist group itself.

Pakistan had been a key ally of the United States against the Al Qaeda & Taliban but deep mistrust between the two countries' intelligence agencies was laid bare during the last week of April 2011 with the leak of a 2007 US list of **"terrorist and terrorist support entities"** that included Pakistan's ISI. That was why, when a week later, a SEAL operation of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2011 was launched in Abbottabad, Pakistan was not told even.

The ISI appeared with some 70 other groups, including Iranian intelligence and the Taliban, on a memo from the US camp for war prisoners at Guantanamo Bay that was released by the website of WikiLeaks. The exposure of the private US assessment had caused considerable strains in the relationship between the United States and ISI, which allegedly had longstanding ties to militants but also worked closely with the CIA; suggesting that it played a double game.

Let us hope if our civil & military elite would keep Pakistan first.